

Therefore, I shall be able to form the best connecting link with what the Building stood for, if I try first — today in a somewhat different way from the one I have employed here for many years — to answer the question: What is Anthroposophy?

To start with, Anthroposophy claims to be a knowledge of the spiritual world, which can fully take its place beside the magnificent natural science of our time. It aims to rank with natural science, not only as regards scientific conscientiousness, but it also requires that anyone who wishes, not merely to *receive* Anthroposophy into his mind, but to *build it up*, must, before all else, have gone through all the rigid and serious methods used today by natural science.

In all this the purpose of Anthroposophy is the complete opposite of what I have cited as the opinions of the world about it. With regard to these opinions, which I have given only in part, we can only be astonished that it is possible for ideas about anything to become fixed in the minds of the public, which are the exact opposite of what is really intended. For it can be flatly said that all I have mentioned as opinions of the world is not Anthroposophy, but that Anthroposophy purposes to be a serious knowledge of the spiritual world.

You well know, my dear friends, that today anything claiming to be knowledge of the spiritual world is regarded somewhat contemptuously, or at least with great doubt. The scientific education that mankind has enjoyed for the past three or four hundred years was of such a nature that in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the opinion came gradually to be held that, by means of the strict methods employed today by natural science, man can know what is presented to the senses in his environment, and also what the human intellect can deduce from sense-perception, with the help of its methods of experiment and observation. But on the other hand, knowledge of the spiritual is declined, by those very people who are firmly convinced that they stand on the strict basis of this natural-scientific world-view. For it is said, whether with a certain arrogance or with a certain despondency, that with regard to the spiritual there are barriers to man's knowledge, that with regard to the spirit man must be satisfied with concepts of belief.

Because of this there results a serious inner soul-discord for very many people who get their education from the natural science that is everywhere popularized today. The concepts of belief are handed down from ancient times. It is not known that they also correspond to concepts of knowledge which humanity attained at earlier stages, and that' these are still contained in the traditions, in what has been handed down. If they are accepted just as concepts of belief, then the soul is brought into contradiction with everything it takes in when it accepts what in our day is won for humanity and for practical life in such a rigorous way by the methods of natural science.

What is won in this way cannot really be called the possession of a small group of educated people; rather, this special mode of thought derived from natural science has already penetrated the instruction of the primary grades of school. And we might even say that the condition of soul that results from natural science, if not natural science itself, has been spread everywhere, ever farther and farther, even into the most primitive, outermost human settlements. This brings it about that many people do not know that their soul-longing is for concepts about the spiritual world similar to those they have about the natural world; but this causes in many of them, nevertheless, a discord of soul which is expressed in all kinds of dissatisfactions with life. People feel a certain inner unrest and perplexity. With the

concepts and feelings they have, they do not rightly know how to take their place in life. They ascribe the trouble to all sorts of things, but the real cause lies in what I have said.

People today long for real knowledge-concepts about the spiritual world, not for concepts of belief. Such knowledge-concepts are what Anthroposophy strives for; but in doing so it must, of course, vindicate an entirely different concept of knowledge from the one we are accustomed to today. And if I am to characterize this concept, I should like to do it by means of a sort of comparison, which is, however, more than a mere comparison, and is to lead directly to the way in which Anthroposophy strives to know the super-sensible-spiritual.

Let us think first of the strange world which each of you knows as the other side of human existence, as it were, the other side of human consciousness — let us think of the dream-world. Each of you can remember the variegated, diverse, colorful pictures that appear out of the dark depths of sleep. If you observe dreams from the waking state, you will find that these are connected in some way with what one is or does while awake. Even when at times they are prophetic dreams, which is by no means to be denied, they are nevertheless connected with what the dreamer has experienced — only a natural formative fantasy acts in the most extravagant way to metamorphose these experiences. In a different way such dreams are connected with the human bodily conditions; difficulty in breathing, rapid heart-action, disturbances in the organism, are experienced symbolically in dreams in many ways.

Let us imagine for a moment, merely to develop the thought that is needed here, that a person lived in this dream-world, that he had no other world; he would never be able to emerge from this world, but' would regard it as his reality. If through some kind of outer forces, the human life took its course exactly as it does now, that we went about in the cities and did our work, but did not consciously see this work, just always dreamed, then we human beings would regard the dream-world as the only reality, just as the dreamer in the moment of the dream regards his variously decked-out dream-world as his reality» Only when we wake up can we truly form a judgment, from the waking point of view, by means of the way we are then related to the world of our environment, about the real value and significance of the dream, While remaining in the dream, we can come to no such judgment. It is only possible from the point of view of the waking life to judge to what extent the dream is related to life-remiscences, or to bodily conditions. To form a judgment about the dream, one must first wake up.

Now the human being lives also in his will, for it is particularly the will that, upon waking, is projected into the events of the outer sense-world; man lives now in the pictures which this sense-world transmits to his soul. We have no judgment whatever about the reality, except the feeling of being in the sense-world, the feeling of union with this sense-world; and from this point of view — I might say of insertion of the whole soul-being into *this* world by means of the *body* — we at first regard it as reality, and the deceptive pictures of the dream as not belonging to this reality.

But now, especially when anyone surveys all that the pictures of the outer sense-reality give to him, certainly at some time the question will appear: How is what he himself experiences within him as his soul-spirit-being related to the transformations and the variability of the outer sense-world?

The great questions of existence present themselves when a man compares what he sees in the outer sense-world with what he feels as his own being, in his thinking and feeling, his sensing and his willing, rising out of the depths of his humanness, — those great questions of existence which may

perhaps be comprised in the one question: What value, as reality, has that which pertains to the soul? This then expands to questions of soul-immortality, of human freedom, and numberless others that spring up. For one will soon feel how entirely different the experience is when looking outward and receiving sense-impressions, from that of looking inward and having soul-experiences. And from such experiences the question must of necessity arise Is it perhaps possible, through some kind of second awakening, a higher awakening, to attain from a higher standpoint knowledge about sense-reality itself, in the same way that a man acquires from the sense-reality a judgment about the dream-world, when, as a matter of course, he awakes in the morning?

When a man is convinced that the imagination of the dream can be judged with regard to its value as reality, only from the standpoint of waking life, then he must strive to gain a point of view which can in turn reveal something about the value as reality, of the higher value, of sense-experience itself.

And now the great question concerning a knowledge of spirit may be put this way: Can we perhaps wake up in a higher sense from our everyday waking consciousness? and does' there result from such second waking a knowledge about the sense-world, just as from the sense-world comes knowledge about the dream?

From a public lecture given in Basel, Switzerland about three months after the burning of the Goetheanum on New Years Eve / Day 1922/23. **The Aims of Anthroposophy and the Purpose of the Goetheanum**, April 9, 1923

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